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ABSTRACT

To determine what the school district needed to do to meet the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act and to continue to provide the best programs for students, the Edina Public Schools, Minnesota, conducted a comparative study of improvement of student achievement. The study was based on surveys and interviews, analyses of survey data, and group discussion about a number of key areas related to elementary and secondary education. The study was conducted in metropolitan school districts in the Edina area and in three other school districts selected because of the improved overall school achievement on the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA). In addition to survey data, data on 5-year MCA scores, average improvement rates using the linear regression analyses, district demographics, teacher characteristics, and the percentage of first year teachers were collected from the state databases. After reviewing all the data, the study committee identified these strategies for effective practice: (1) provide intensive and explicit instruction to students in reading and mathematics; (2) develop clear achievement goals; (3) align districtwide curriculum, instruction, and assessments; (4) provide additional and progressively intensive intervention programs for low-achieving students; (5) expand training and support to teachers in the use of assessment data; (6) develop concrete accountability systems; and (7) provide an appropriate amount of preparation for the MCA tests. (Contains 11 tables.) (SLD)

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Benchmarking to the Best

A Comparative Study of School District Improvement of Student Achievement

February 2003

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2

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1
Purpose of the Study 3
Data Selection and Collection 4
Methodology of the Study 4
Challenges 4
Common Effective Practices 5
- Reading Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments 5
- Mathematics Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments 5
- Intervention Programs 5
- Gifted Education Programs 6
- Teacher Characteristics and Support 6
- MCA Preparation 6

Key Strategies, Recommendations and Implications 6

References 9

Appendix: Results of School/District Surveys and Interview 10
- Table 1. Reading Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment 11
- Table 2. Math Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment 12
- Open Ended Questions for Curriculum and Instruction 13
- Table 3. Intervention Services 14
- Table 4. Gifted Education Programs 15
- Table 5. Teacher Characteristics and Teacher Supports 16
- Table 6. Staff Development for K-5 17
- Table 7. MCA Preparation 18
- Table 8. MCA Results Comparison, 1998-2002 19
- Table 9. Demographic Data, 2001-02 20
- Table 10. Teacher Characteristics, 2001-02 21
- Table 11. Percentage of Teachers in First Year Teaching, 1998-2002 22

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The new federal legislation, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), requires additional statewide assessments to hold schools accountable. A school or a district is a place for active learning. With NCLB implementation, how can a high-achieving school or district maintain and improve in the statewide assessments? What factors have impacts on student performance in statewide assessments in terms of school/district policies, programs, curricula as well as instructional strategies?

In order to answer these questions and continue to provide the best programs for our students, the Edina Public Schools conducted a comparative study. This study was based on surveys and interviews, analyses of survey data, and group discussion. The key areas of the survey include (1) curriculum, instruction and assessment, (2) student intervention programs, (3) gifted education programs, (4) teacher characteristics and teacher support programs, (5) staff development, (6) MCA preparation. West metro school districts were selected for this study. Three other schools/districts, including Burroughs Elementary School in Minneapolis, Brainerd Pubic Schools, and Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Public Schools, were also selected because they demonstrated a trend of improved overall student achievement over the five years and were in the top 30 in 2002 MCA scores.

In addition to survey data, five-year MCA scores, average improvement rates using the linear regression analyses, district demographics, teacher characteristics, and the percentage of first year teachers were collected from the state databases. After careful review and intensive discussion, the committee identified the following strategies for effective practice:

1. **Provide intensive and explicit instruction** to students (K-5) in reading (90-120 minutes) and math (45-90 minutes) daily. Communicate, support and monitor these expectations at the classroom level.

2. **Develop clear achievement goals** based on state standards; align curriculum with state standards and translate these standards into instructional practice.

3. **Align districtwide curriculum, instruction and assessments**; share and use successful instructional strategies.

4. **Provide additional and progressively intensive intervention programs for low-achieving students.**

5. **Expand training and support to teachers in the use of assessment data** to identify weaknesses in instruction and make school improvement.

6. **Develop concrete accountability systems** that hold all staff responsible for producing achievement results. In

particular, increase teacher ownership and inter-grade cooperation for student achievement.

7. **Provide an appropriate amount of preparation for MCA tests.** Data in this study shows schools/districts providing some preparation for MCA were more likely to achieve higher scores than schools/districts that didn't provide any preparation. However, the balance between test preparation and learning time should be carefully-maintained.

This study is exploratory and not designed to yield definitive conclusions. However, we hope these answers will provide evidence of effective practice that may influence student learning, and encourage the development of district policies and instructional strategies that will better ensure success for students. In addition, we hope this study will lead educators to ask further questions and to conduct more research that may deepen this insight into practical implications for student academic achievement.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study, *Benchmarking to the Best*, began in September 2002 as the Edina Public Schools' administrators reviewed the Edina student testing results from the 2002 Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA).

As a high-achieving school district, our staff devote a great deal of effort and expertise to teach our students and strive for the best. The 2002 MCA results showed that Edina students achieved well, but in comparison with our achievement in the previous years, the results in 2002 didn't show continuous improvement.

The primary question is: ***how does a high-achieving suburban school district continuously make improvement?***

To begin answering this question, we reviewed the MCA results from other districts that are similar to Edina in district characteristics and student demographics. This comparison suggested the improvement in MCA scores varied dramatically among districts.

The second question is: ***why did some districts show impressive improvement but some didn't?***

The Superintendent of Edina Public Schools requested that a task force conduct a comparative study. A Comparative Study Committee was formed including elementary school principals, district administrators and curriculum specialists. This committee identified schools/districts with high MCA scores; compared Edina school district with west metro referenced school districts and other schools/districts with high MCA scores; and found commonalties across these faster improving schools/districts.

A literature search demonstrated that there has been much research on how a school, in particular, an urban school, makes continuous improvement. However, there was relatively little on how a district, in particular, a suburban high-achieving district makes continuous improvement. For school improvement to be widespread and sustained and for our nation to make improvement in academic achievement, all districts should be involved and play a key role.

This study examined important aspects of Minneapolis west metro school districts and several districts located in other regions that have improved tremendously in the past several years based on their MCA results. This study attempted to use the experience of these school districts to address the following questions:

1. What were administrative and programmatic factors impacting student achievement?

2. How can we characterize the nature of the changes in student achievement?

3. What district-level strategies were used to improve student achievement?

4. What was the connection between policies, practices and strategies at the district level and actual changes in teaching and learning in the classroom?

We hope these answers will provide evidence of effective practices that may

influence student learning. In addition to that, we hope this study encourages the development of district practice and instructional strategies that will better ensure success for students in our district as well as for students across Minnesota.

DATA SELECTION AND COLLECTION

Minneapolis west metro school districts were selected, because these school districts are located close to Edina and have similar demographics. Second, the Comparative Study Committee identified three other schools/districts that are not located in the west metro area. These schools/districts, including Burroughs Elementary School in Minneapolis, Brainerd Schools, and Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan Schools, were selected because they met the following criteria:

1. The districts had schools which were in the top 30 in 2002 MCA scores.
2. They demonstrated a trend of improved overall student achievement over the past five years.
3. They were improving more rapidly than the average improvement rate statewide.

METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

This study is based on surveys, analysis of survey data and group discussion. It began with the development of a structured interview/survey to compare the common areas among the schools/districts. Key areas of the survey include (1) curriculum, instruction and assessment, (2) student intervention programs, (3) gifted education programs, (4) teacher characteristics and teacher support programs, (5) staff development, (6) MCA preparation. For cross-validation of information from each district, a district was interviewed or surveyed two times, one at the district level and one at the school level. All members of the Comparative Study Committee participated in interviewing schools or districts and collecting data.

Second, all completed surveys were organized so that different schools/districts could be compared and analyzed on a comparable structure. Third, additional data for these schools/districts were collected from the state database, including five-year MCA scores, improvement rates using linear regression analyses, district demographics, teacher characteristics, and the percentage of first year teachers.

Finally, the committee reviewed and discussed all data collected using a step-by-step approach. This discussion generated the following findings.

CHALLENGES

Most districts, regardless of their demographics, location, or historical record of student achievement, try to address the question: How can a district continuously improve student achievement and be consistent with the State Accountability System directed by the No Child Left Behind Act? During the journey to improve student achievement, these districts face the following common challenges.

1. High percentage of inexperienced teachers. Most west metro districts are experiencing high teacher turnover because of teacher retirement. Consequently, these districts have many relatively inexperienced teachers. Tables 10 and 11 reflect the number of 1st year teachers.

2. Decreased Funding. These districts face budget pressures. In some districts, they have cut more programs than others because of their financial circumstances.

3. Lack of data on the completion of the math curriculum. There is a lack in the degree of completion of the math curriculum at each grade level among most districts.

4. Limited follow up to staff development training. Most districts have random and uncoordinated staff development follow-up. Some districts acknowledged that this is a key area for improvement.

COMMON EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

By reviewing data collected from the selected districts, we found that the districts with the highest scores on MCA's have the following common effective practices.

Reading Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments

1. Require explicit classroom reading instruction, 90-120 minutes daily.
2. Coordinate and align reading intervention programs.
3. Require primary level (K-2) reading intervention.
4. Analyze districtwide assessments to improve reading achievement.
5. Allocate staff per school to reading intervention during the school year (most intervention time and financial support is dedicated to reading).
6. Implement an intensive summer reading intervention program.

Math Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments

1. Require explicit classroom math instruction, 45-90 minutes daily.
2. Use math programs endorsed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (Everyday Math, Investigations, etc.).
3. Require primary level (K-2) math concept development.
4. Provide some math intervention support (although less than reading).
5. Analyze districtwide assessments to improve math achievement.
6. Use some form of math pre- or post-tests.

Intervention Programs

1. Provide district-coordinated student intervention programs.
2. Provide summer intervention services.
3. Provide an extended day/extended year program for intervention.
4. Use district established criteria and assessments to identify students in need of intervention.

Staff Development

1. Provide mentoring for new staff.
2. Demonstrate coordination in planning between district and sites.
3. Foster and implement a study-group model of embedded staff development.
4. Focus on literacy, differentiation and technology for staff development in the last three years.
5. Provide incentives for staff to participate.

Gifted Education Programs

1. Support gifted education at both site and district levels.
2. Sponsor summer programs by intermediate school districts and/or local district community education programs.
3. Use a standardized system for identification or selection of student participants.
4. Develop a district gifted education program based on the district curriculum.

Teacher Characteristics and Support

1. Tend to have an average teaching experience of 10-15 years for most districts.
2. Recruit well-educated staff. Most districts have over 50% of staff with advanced degrees
3. Provide a variety of teacher support on site. Teacher support varies across districts.
4. Provide staff for teacher curriculum support.
5. Maintain half-day kindergarten services with a trend toward a fee-based full day option.
6. Keep class sizes smaller at kindergarten and increase from kindergarten to Grade 5.

MCA Preparation

1. Provide some classroom preparation such as using CFL practice tests.
2. Send information letters to parents and provide access to CFL practice tests, newspaper test practice packages, etc.
3. Test preparation time and materials vary by district and site.

In addition, results from open-ended questions suggest that most teachers understand the curriculum objectives via curriculum guides and/or meetings. Parent involvement in student learning is expected and supported.

KEY STRATEGIES, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Based on what the committee discussed and learned from this study, this committee provides the following recommendations for the Edina Public Schools for improving student achievement.

1. **Provide intensive and explicit instruction to students** (K-5) in reading (90-120 minutes) and math (45-90 minutes) daily. Communicate, support and monitor these expectations at the classroom level.

   Currently, explicit instruction is generally implemented at the lower end of the expected range in the district and is varied across classrooms.

Recommendation: Communicate, monitor and support expectations of the intensive and explicit instruction to the classroom level.

2. **Develop clear achievement goals** based on state standards, align curriculum with state standards and help translate these standards into instructional practice.

   Currently, clear achievement goals that are consistent with state standards have been developed.

   Recommendation: Develop and/or implement reliable and user-friendly classroom assessments, using new technology, for measuring achievement goals that are consistent with state standards.

3. **Align districtwide curriculum, instruction and assessment**, share and use successful instructional strategies.

   Currently, the district has developed a common curriculum, identified effective instructional strategies, and established an on-going review process.

   Recommendation: Continue working on alignment of assessment, curriculum and instruction. Expand support to teachers in the use of successful instructional strategies and assessment data for instruction.

4. **Provide additional and progressively intensive programs for low-achieving students.**

   Currently, the district has procedures and protocol to identify and support students through the Foundations of Learning, Success Centers, Excel at the middle schools, and Summer School.

   Recommendation: Coordinate and align student support to assure acceleration of academic progress for low-achieving students.

5. **Expand training and support to teachers in the use of assessment data** to identify weaknesses in instruction and make school improvement.

   Currently, the district has developed and maintained a data matrix for data-driven decision making at district and school levels. Teachers, principals, and district administrators are provided data at regular intervals from the beginning to the end of each academic year. However, the use of assessment data to inform instruction is inconsistent at the classroom level.

   Recommendation: Provide professional development training on using and understanding data to inform decisions and planning as well as for diagnostic purposes in instruction.

6. **Develop concrete accountability systems that hold all staff responsible for producing results.** Increase teacher ownership and inter-grade cooperation for student achievement.

   Current expectations regarding teachers' responsibility for inter-grade level cooperation are inconsistent and unclear.

Recommendations: Establish clear accountability standards and expectations for schools through the school improvement process. Communicate, support and monitor inter-grade dependency of student learning at the classroom level.

7. **Provide an appropriate amount of preparation for MCA tests.** Data in this study shows that schools/districts using some preparation strategies for MCA were more likely to achieve higher scores than schools/districts that didn't provide any preparation. However, the balance between test preparation and learning time should be carefully maintained.

   Current school and classroom preparation for MCA tests is varied.

   Recommendation: Ensure that time is devoted to MCA preparation, teachers are aware of state practice tests, and parent information is provided.

This study is exploratory and not designed to yield definitive conclusions. However, the survey data gathered from these districts helped further our understanding of the functions of schools/districts in promoting student achievement. Observing how a high-achieving school district provided programs and services for students and delivered policies and strategies that met student needs enables us to develop clear policies and practices that are helpful to improve student achievement in our district.

In presenting the data, analyses and recommendations, we hope people will benefit from our insights and learn from our errors. We hope this study will lead educators to ask further questions and to conduct more research that may deepen this insight into the practical implications for student academic achievement.

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Appendix

Comparative Study
Results of District/School Surveys and Interview
November 2002

Table 1. Reading Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments

	Curriculum			Instruction			District Assessment		Classroom Assessment	
District	**Textbooks & series**	**Any Curriculum Change**	**Any impact on MCA results**	**Minutes a day for instructing and students doing tasks**	**Level in reading**	**Pre- or post-test**	**Name of Tests**	**Times per year and minutes spends**	**Name of Tests**	**Times per year and minutes a student spends**
Bloomington	HB, 1997	No		K:60; G1-5: 120	NA	No	G2-5:CALT	G2:(F & S) Gr. 3-5 (S)	End of Unit skills tests	
Brainerd	K-2: McMillan, Rigby/writing group; G3-5: HB 2001	Gr. 3: 2 years ago; Gr. 4: one year ago; Gr. 5: last year	The curriculum aligns with MN standards. Steady progress.	K: 140 min. Gr. 1-2: 180 integrated. Gr. 3-5: 120 min. integrated.		Pre-assessment and on-going record	G4: NWEA K: KIDS Inventory; Gr. 1-2 Local WS	4 hrs (S)	K: KIDS; 1-2: WS;	ongoing
Burroughs Elem (Minneapolis)	HM	K-2: 2 yr. ago; 3-5: 3 yr. ago	Some dip possible but not obviously	K: 90 min. G1-5: 120-150 min.	All grades	Yes	G2-5: NALT	Spring	CBM	
Eden Prairie	K-5: McM.	No	N/A	No spec. requirement	K-2: Completed Gr. 3-5: Less	No	K-2: WSS, G4: ITBS & CogAT;	4 hrs (S)	K-2: Phonics Checklists	
Edina	K: HB 2000; Gr. 1-5: HB, 1997	No		K: 60 min. 1-3: 120 min. Gr. 4-5: 90 min.	Yes	No	Gr. 2-5 ALT; Gr. 2, 4: CogAT	2 hours (S) 2-3 hours (S)	HB Assessments CRA, ORI	Several times a year
Hopkins	HM	1 year ago	Not directly to MCAs.	60 min. and more in K-2. Guided reading at least 2 a week.		Yes	G4-5: ALT; G4: ITBS	2 hours (S) 4 hours (S)	Leveled Reading tests	Fall and Spring
Minnetonka	HM	2002		120-150 min	Yes	Post-tests	1-2: Gates-MacGinitie; G4: ITBS and CogAT	Gr. 1-2: 2 hr (S); Gr. 3-5: 4-5 hrs (S)	Chapter tests	
Richfield	K-3: Rigby Gr. 4-5: HB	1997-98		Gr. 1-5: 60 min (integrated with SS and S)	Yes (Combination of HB and Rigby)	Yes, post-tests.	G4: CALT K-5: Series Tests	Gr. 4: 4 hrs 12 hrs	Gr. 1-2: DRA; Gr. 3-5: QRI	1-2: 80 min.;
Robbinsdale	HB	3 years ago	Yes, MCA scores increased	about 90 min		Yes	K-2: Literacy Gr. 3-5: NALT Gr. 4 writing	Spring 2 hours (S)		
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan	HM and Rigby	No		K: 60; G1-5: 90min		No	Gr. 2-5 MAT-7 or Gr. 3,5 MAT-7 & Olsat	5-6 hours	Gr. 3-5 QRI Gr. 2, 4 DRA or other perf. assessments	Several times a year
St. Louis Park	K-2: R-LL-HM; Gr. 3-5: HM	2000-01	Too early to tell	K: 45-60; Gr. 1-5: 90-120	4 themes and 2 optional Chapter books	No	Gr. 2, 4: CAT		Gr. 1-5: QRI	4 hours
Wayzata	McM.	1997-98	MCA scores maintained and increased	K: 45 min. Gr. 1-5: 90 min.	Gr. 1: Level 14 Gr. 2: Level 22	Gr. 2-5: Yes	G 3-5: WALT	1 hour (S)	Gr. 1: Marie Clay Observation	F and S (going to test Gr. 2).

Note: HB—Harcourt Brace. HM—Houghton Mifflin. McM—Macmillan.

Table 2. Math Curriculum, Instruction and Assessments

	Curriculum			Instruction			District Assessment		Classroom Assessment	
District	**Textbooks & series**	**Any Curriculum Change**	**Any impact on MCA results?**	**Minutes a day for instruction. and students doing tasks**	**Units of Math textbook are covered**	**Pre- or post-test**	**Name of Tests**	**Times per year and minutes spends**	**Name of Tests**	**Times per year and minutes a student spends**
Bloomington	EM, 2001	2001	MCA results are very positive	K: 30min; 1-5: 60 min	NA	Yes, post-tests.	G2-5: CALT	Gr. 2: 2 hrs (F & S); Gr.3-5: 2 hr (S)	End of Unit tests from EM	3 hrs
Brainerd	K: Mimosa Math, EM; 1-5: EM	Moving to new EDL this year		60 min		Yes, a lot of post-tests	G4: NWEA K: KIDS Inventory Gr. 1-2: Local WS	3 hrs	K-2: On-going FWS	
Burroughs Elem (MPLS)	EM	5 years ago		60 min	All unites	Yes	Gr. 2-5: NALT	1 hour	Book assessment	
Eden Prairie	K-5: Investigations	2 years ago	Reduced results (implementation dip?)	K: 20-30 min.; Gr. 1-5: 45-60 min	75% of units	No	Gr. 4: ITBS/CogAT	Gr. 4: 10 hours	None	
Edina	K-3: EM 2001 Gr. 4-5: EM 2002	No		About 60 min	K-1: All Gr. 2: 75-100% Gr. 3: 72-100% Gr. 4: 67-100% Gr. 5: 67-100%	Yes, post-tests	Gr. 2-5 ALT Gr. 2, 4: CogAT	1 hours (S) 3-4 hrs (S)	End of unit tests from EM	Several times a year
Hopkins	Investigations	5 years ago		60 min		Computation Benchmark tests	Gr. 4-5 ALT; Gr. 4 ITBS	1 hours (S)		
Minnetonka	HM, 1995	Planning for 2003		45-60 min	70%	No	Gr. 2: Gates-MacGinitie. Gr. 4: ITBS and CogAT	4-6 hours (S)		
Richfield	EM	No		Gr. 1-5: 90min	At least 90 min.	Yes	Gr. 4 CALT	4 hrs	Everyday Math	80 min. + 60 min. homework
Robbinsdale	HB	1 year ago	MCA scores increased.	90 Min		Yes	Gr. 3-5: NALT	1 hours (S)		
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan	K-3: Mimosa Gr. 4-5: Harcourt Brace			K: 30 min; Gr. 1: 50 m Gr. 2-5: 60 min	NA	No	Gr. 2-5 MAT-7 or Gr. 3,5 MAT-7 & Olsat	5-6 hours	Gr. 3-5 QRI Gr. 2, 4 DRA or other perf. assessments	Several times a year
St. Louis Park	Traiblaze	2002-03		K: 30-35; Gr. 1-5: 60-75	18-20 units	No	Gr. 2, 4: CAT K-5: Series T	4 hrs 12 hrs	Series-based	4 hrs
Wayzata	EM	1 year ago	Maintained and increased	K: 45 min. Gr. 1-5: 90 min.	Not done analysis yet	Post-tests	Gr. 3-5: WALT	1 hr (S)	Gr. 1: Marie Clay Observ.	F and S (going to test Gr. 2).

Note: EM—Everyday Math. Mimosa—Mimosa Publications, Growing with Mathematics Program. Traiblaze—Keudall/Hunt Publishing, Math Traiblaze Program.

Open Ended Question for Curriculum and Instruction

1. How do you help teachers understand objectives of the curriculum?

Bloomington: We use a considerable amount of our staff development resources to plan and implement teacher-training programs for new curriculum adoptions. For example, all elementary teachers receives a full day of summer training this past year; 50% of school-year staff development time is devoted to implementation and training. We also have a Math Quality Assurance Team which monitors implementation issues.

Brained: We meet with each grade level at least 3 times a year and as we have phased in a new adoption of the Harcourt reading program, we have met with that grade level on a monthly basis. Kdgn also meets monthly. On-going opportunities for dialog among teachers is the best way—whether it be at the building or district level.

Burroughs: .5 staff helped with Reading contents for classroom teachers.

Eden Prairie: (1) Curriculum guides—Part curriculum and part parent support component. (2) Progress reports and rubrics aligned to curriculum (one line via Intranet). (3) Creating grade level curriculum repositories. (4) Staff development, on and off site. (5) Summer Best Practice Institute.

Minnetonka: Define learning outcomes.

Richfield: Grad. Standards Technician coach at primary gr. 1-2. gr. 3-5. Now cut due to failure of referendum.

Robbinsdale: Solid staff with training—keep new staff up to speed.

St. Louis Park: Grade level meetings: faculty staff meetings.

Wayzata: (1) Teachers are granted ½ time sabbatical for subject areas under review. (2) District-wide curriculum discussion for one day. (3) ½ Language arts curriculum specialist coordination position.

2. How are parents in your school involved in student learning?

Bloomington: Student conferences, fall goal-setting conferences; PER committee; site based leadership teams and PTA organizations.

Brained: Brainerd has strong parental support. We of course struggle with the same issues many schools do with some families. We have a strong early childhood family ed and ESCS programs, our Title I program addresses parental involvement on a fairly regular basis and specific programs such as Reading Recovery have very strong parental components.

Burroughs: "Curriculum nights"—Parents and students come together. Parent liaison works with parents/parent groups and with home class workers.

Eden Prairie: (1) Parent component in each curriculum; (2) Pilot using parent volunteers in math esp. for students with language issues (LEP and Sp. Ed.); (3) PTOs (4). K-12 Parent Advisory Council Similar to ECFE Council. (4) Open Forums (5) Committee Structures. (6) Parent center, Parent Connection (website), PTO meetings, Open House, Early Listening Conferences, Parent Booklet.

Eden Prairie: (1) Parent Conferences. (2) Volunteering: District/Parent Advisory Councils; (3) Parent nights. (4) Site council, PTO.

Edina: Parents assist with Reading, Math, Sciences and other activities, strong ECFE.

Richfield: "Project empowerment" – Parents of color set objectives with school/district staff, materials sent home.

Robbinsdale: Math orientation night for parents, web site links for parent helps.

Wayzata: (1) 2 Conferences a year; (2) Portfolio development and presentation.

Table 3. Intervention Services

	Curriculum & Textbooks		# of staff (FTE) and weekly hours at site		# of staff (FTE) and weekly hours at DO					Assessment	
District	**Reading**	**Math**	**Para**	**Teachers**	**Professional**	**Secretary**	**Summer Programs**	**% Students served**	**Extended day program**	**Reading**	**Math**
Bloomington	ALC Programs				5.0 FTE (in 3 Title 1 Elem. school)		Yes	total 600+	Yes	CALT	CALT
Burroughs (MPLS)	STRP, Early Success	STRP, Early Success	3.7 FTE (6 people)	in class			Yes		Yes	NALT, MCA, CBM, Phonic A Aware	NALT, MCA, Quarterly Tests
Brainerd	Reading Mastery DI		1.25/site	1.3/site	?	1				District Assessments	District Assessments
Eden Prairie	Reading Naturally & Soar to Success	Accel Math	125 days @ 5 hrs	None	.5 FTE Educ Coord. @ each site	None	Yes, 2-2 week	5-7%	No, but pilot in MLE	ITBS, MCA, and district-created.	ITBS, MCA, and district-created.
Edina	Soar to Success Early Success	Math Steps	1.2 FTE	4.2 FTE	.5 FTE	.25 FTE	Yes, 3 weeks	20-25%	Yes	DRA, IRI, QRI, ALT	End of Year Test, ALT
Hopkins			2	3 FTE (Title I)	1FTE		Yes, #287				
Minnetonka			Few	1.0 FTE Basic Skills Teacher			Yes				
Richfield	Reading recovery	Flexible	2 FTE for K-2. 1FTE for Gr. 3-5	2 FTE for K-2. 1FTE for Gr. 3-5	None (due to cut before 4 FTE)	2 FTE (due to cut before 2)	Yes		Yes		
Robbinsdale	Guided reading created by U of M	HBJ	1 FTE	1.5 w/85 students	7 FTE	None	Yes	20%	Yes	K-2: NNAT Gr. 3-5: NALT, MCA	K-2: NNAT Gr. 3-5: NALT, MCA
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan			1.0 w/ 8 hours a week in K	K: 2 hrs; Gr. 1-5: 5.5 hrs; Gr. 1 .75 Rd recovery teacher; Gr. 2-5: .75 Basic skills teacher	.5 FTE		Yes	10%		MAT-7	MAT-7
St. Louis Park	Barb Taylor, Leveled books, and Fontas/Pinne	District developed	No	Reading: .5 to 1.7/site Math=4 tchrs @25 hrs/week x28 weeks	.5 and .3 title I Coord. Dir. of C& L (< 5%)	None	Yes	5%		ORI	ALT
Wayzata	Early Success; Reading Recovery, and Read Naturally…	None	5 hr. per day	None	1.0 FTE Director of Title I; .5 FTE Prof.	1.0 FTE	Yes	5-20%	Yes	K-1: WSS/COST; Gr. 2: WSS/BRI; Gr. 3-5: BRI/WALT	K-1: WSS/COST; Gr. 2: WSS/BRI; Gr. 3-5: BRI/WALT

Table 4. Gifted Education Programs

	Curriculum & Textbooks		At site	# of staff and weekly hours in DO				Assessments		
District	**Reading**	**Math**	**# of staff and weekly hours**	**Professional**	**Secretary**	**Summer Program**	**% student serving**	**Reading**	**Math**	**Extended day**
Bloomington	None	None		3.0 FTE	No	Yes, Dist #287	2-5: 10%	CALT	CALT	No
Brainerd	Basal and lots of supplements	Investiga-tions	1 FTE/site	?	No	Through community ed		WISC R	WISC R	
Burroughs Elem (MPLS)	Catalyst					Yes				
Eden Prairie	Gr. 5 Novels	CMP	1.5 FTE for Gr. 5			Yes, District 287		ITBS, D-Cat, CogAT	TOMAGS	
Edina	District-developed	District-developed	0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	.5 FTE	Yes, Dist #287/Comm. Educ.	10-15%	CogAT ALT	CogAT ALT	No
Hopkins				1.8 FTE	1 FTE					
Minnetonka	District-developed	District-developed	.5 Tchr & .5 para	1 FTE	1 FTE		17-20%	Slossen, Woodcock Johnson		
Richfield			.5 FTE/K-2; 1.0 Gr. 3-5	.5 FTE	No	Yes, District 287	10%	Top 2% from Standardized Tests	Top 2% from Standardized Tests	No
Robbinsdale	District-developed			.3 FTE	No	Yes (through comm. Ed.)	5%	NALT	NALT	No
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan			0.5 FTE	0.5 FTE	No		10-25%	MAT-7	MAT-7	Yes
St. Louis Park	Varied	Varied	.5 FTE / site	.1 FTE but mostly gratis	.75 FTE	Yes, District 287	15%			
Wayzata	District-developed	District-developed	.5 FTE /site	.2 FTE professional	.4 FTE secretary	Yes, District 287 and CES	25%	Kingore	Kingore	No

Table 5. Teacher Characteristics and Teacher Supports

		Teacher Characteristics		# Curriculum Specialist (FTE) and weekly hours in Language Arts and Math		
District	**Ratio of Classroom Teachers to Students**	**Experience**	**Level of Education**	**Site**	**District Office**	**Half day or all day Kindergarten. If full day, how is full day funded?**
Bloomington	K-5: about 22.	11.4 years	BA: 51%; MA or higher: 49%	None	1.0 FTE curriculum specialist; 1.0 FTE Director	Full day in one school funded through compensatory funds and Title I; ½ day in all others.
Brainerd	K-2: 22 Gr. 3: 23; Gr. 4: 24; Gr. 5 25	15.9 years	BA: 36%; MA or higher: 64%	None	.5 FTE elementary curriculum 1FTE--Art	21 sections of Kindergarten; 12 are all day; 7 are all day every day and 2 are half day through grants
Burroughs Elem (MPLS)	K-2: 19 Gr. 3-5: 25	Burr--15.9, DO--11.3	BA: 53%; MA or higher: 46%	varies, (cuts)	Have 1-2 per content area	at least 1 FD in each site
Eden Prairie	K-5: 22-24	12.7 years	BA: 45%; MA or higher: 55%	1.0 FTE Ed. Coord. w/other duties	1.2 FTE	8-10 full day w/parents paying .5; 12 half day at Kindergarten Center.
Edina	K: 20.5; Gr. 1-3; 22; Gr. 4-5: 22.6	9.6 years	BA: 42%; MA or higher: 58%	.5 FTE Inst./Tech. specialist (some LA/M support to non-tenured staff.	1.0 FTE Director 1.0 FTE Literacy; 1.0 FTE Language Arts; .5 FTE Math	½ day and full day fee-based option available through Kids Club.
Hopkins	27.5 w/a cap at 30 students. K-1: additional 30 hr in each classroom to offset the #s.	11.6 years	BA: 36%; MA or higher: 50%; others: 14%	1 teacher per core area receives $1500 and ½ day a month.		Half day
Minnetonka	K: 20: G1: 21; G2-3: 24; G4-5: 26.	10.9 years (70% hired in the last 7 years)	BA: 46%; MA or higher: 54%	VM = 75 min PE = 75 min Art = 60 min Reading = 30 m	2.0 FTE K-12 TOSAS	½ day provided. Full day for $2,600, 40% select full day
Richfield	24		BA: 52%; MA or higher: 48%	None	None	Half day and Fun Club (Kids Club equivalent)
Robbinsdale	K: 17; Gr. 1 23 Gr. 2-3: 28 Gr. 4 30; Gr. 5 26	11.6 years	BA: 55%; MA or higher: 45%	.5 FTE	1FTE Sci/math; 1.0 asst; 1FTE Lang+1.0 asst; 1FTE soc study/writing	Half day
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan	K: 20; Gr. 1; 19; Gr. 2-4: 22; Gr. 5: 24	13.3 years	BA: 44%; MA or higher: 56%	Literacy leader: .25 FTE	1.0 FTE Elem. Curri Specialist 1.0 FTE TOSA	½ day
St. Louis Park	K-1: 20; Gr. 2: 25 Gr. 3: 26; Gr. 4-5: 28	10.5 years	BA: 52%; MA or higher: 48%	TOSA at selected site, 1.6 FTEs	3 FTE including Director of Curriculum	.5 day w/study of full day underway in 02-03
Wayzata	K: 20.6 Gr. 1: 21.3; Gr. 2: 22.1 Gr. 3: 23.4; Gr. 4: 26.6 Gr. 5: 25.3	13.3 years	BA: 40%; MA or higher: 58%	None	Director: 1FTE; Technology Curriculum: 1FTE; Lang.: 0.5 FTE; (4 teachers use ½ time under review cycle)	One full day class on site w/parents paying 50%; 3 half day classes on site; 4 of 7 schools have full days

Table 6. Staff Development for K-5

	Focus	Staff Development Models			# Staff Dev Days			
District	**District Focus in last 3-years**	**In-services**	**Peer Coaching**	**Others (please identify)**	**Incentives**	**Time allocated at site and district**	**Staff development days per year**	**Follow Up**
Bloomington	Teaching strategies, Technology, Diversity	2 SD activities (Classroom management)	Teachers' union sends people to national training	3 studies: 1 fall, winter, and summer	Board Credits, Licensure clock hours. National Board Certificate, $1000 per year	60% dist/40% site (goal 50/50)	5 days	60% dist/40% site (goal 50/50)
Brainerd	Standards based-data driven instruction	3 days regularly schedu. grade level meetings	for beginning and new teachers - 5 days	Several special topic sessions	lane change, credit, stipends $100/6 hrs	50/50	3 days	Regularly scheduled grade level meetings
Burroughs Elem (MPLS)	Literacy	50%	most across gr level	study groups	CEU's Grant $	50/50	8 days	Staff meeting; couching, SD for admin.
Eden Prairie	Technology, Differentiation of Instruction, Writing and Elementary Math		Yes--Once was required	Site collegial study groups	Writing for 175 teachers for credit and pay; 10-15 college credit offering each summer	100% at site	2.5-3.0 all at site	Summer program w/ 2 weeks of best Prctce/curr. classroom mgmt for 50 teachers PIP goal getting
Edina	Literacy, Differentiation of Instruction; Technology	Yes	Mentoring for non-tenured teachers at site	University Partnership; Summer Institute	Limited training rates National Board Certificate, CEUs	50/50	6 days for all; 3 extra days for new teachers	Site SD committee; TOSA's
Hopkins	Technology, Differentiation, math computation			Teacher attend in summer institution (first class free and pay teachers $15 per hour to attend).	First class of summer institute free and $15 a hour for teachers.	50/50	6 days at the start of school year, 50% of the time is class preparation, 3 late strat days, 1 district day	
Minnetonka	Resiliency, Health relization, Restitution	3.5 days/yr.	3 days for teachers, 2 days training	1 district	Able to submit application for grants		3.5	
Richfield	Specialists MCA but cut 3 years ago	New staff: 6 days. Regular: 3 days	Mentors for 2 years		None	50%/50%	3 days regular and 6 days for new teachers	
Robbinsdale	2 years literacy and 1 year math	during year and summer	Yes, peer review	Grade level time PTO $stf devel	None	split, district apply at building	workshop week 4 days	split, district apply at building
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan		Yes	Yes			50/50	3 days	
St. Louis Park	STRP, Differentiation of Instruction, Diversity	Diff. Instr. Strp, SEED	Mentor all year #1--some year #2-3 by site	TOSAs .25-.5 FTE in 5 buildings	CEUS, Lane changes, Some stipends, Board Credit	10% district /90% site	District Fall day, 3 early release	Site meetings
Wayzata	Differentiation of instruction; Technology; School Climate	50%	25%	25% (collegial study group)	CEU's, college Credits; Board Credit; $ for curr. Writing	50% at district; 50% at school.	4.5 days	Growth area, not much follow up.

Table 7. MCA Preparation

District	Incentive for high scores	At Classroom	Parent	Material	Total amount
Bloomington	None	None	None	None	None
Brainerd	None	Regularly scheduled grade level meetings and networking. One school spent a year creating an MCA like test for gr. 2 and 4.	Very little	Good regular curriculum, state practice tests, commercial materials.	Varied. A range of preparation to ensure the students are well prepared.
Burroughs Elem (MPLS)	Yes. "Professional Pay"—pay for other than step/lane—show improvement on student achievement.	Classroom 2000--practice items online	MPLS Schools University-specify course coach; -equate to lane changes /in house credit		
Eden Prairie	None	None	Friendly reminder about the tests	None	No test prep, no incentive, no review of test results until this year
Edina	None	Varied on site	Varied on site	State practice tests	Varied on site
Hopkins	None	August teachers analyze MCA scores and set the goals for staff development. One month before the tests, there is instruction and practice in test taking and skills.	No parent involved in MCA prep		Varied from class to class.
Minnetonka	None	Some-very limited practices	Notes in school newsletter		
Richfield	No, it is part of the strategic plan	Start coach in 1st two years then cut	notification, practice sent home	State materials	Focus on tests, math and reading grades 1-3
Robbinsdale	None	None	Notification of dates		
Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan	None	Workshop in Jan. and Feb., Teachers work with specialists and in inservice and students do practices.	Letter home		Ongoing; All sites' plans gear around MCA
St. Louis Park	None	Grade level meetings review, local scores discussions	Informed about test schedule	None	3-4 weeks but very casual and varied
Wayzata	Building recognition	Use state practice tests/Ruby Payne's test taking strategies	Letter to parents in advance; Pick up state practice tests at school	State and newspaper practice tests	Varies by building

Table 8. MCA Results Comparison, 1998-2002

											Improvement			
	Grade 3 Reading					Grade 3 Mathematics					Reading		Math	
District Name	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	%	Average	%	Average
BLOOMINGTON	1460	1451	1491	1515	1511	1456	1486	1507	1546	1548	3%	20.5	6%	24.4
BRAINERD	1429	1449	1513	1546	1552	1457	1553	1587	1595	1576	9%	41.5	8%	28.0
Burroughs (MPLS)	1330	1382	1512	1505	1584	1312	1419	1558	1520	1540	19%	65.5	15%	55.7
EDEN PRAIRIE	1470	1503	1517	1553	1547	1468	1522	1523	1521	1487	5%	26.3	1%	3.7
EDINA	**1513**	**1528**	**1566**	**1554**	**1551**	**1521**	**1618**	**1611**	**1595**	**1572**	**3%**	**16.1**	**3%**	**7.9**
HOPKINS	1477	1508	1544	1537	1539	1484	1568	1573	1564	1562	4%	21.6	5%	15.2
MINNETONKA	1475	1504	1577	1577	1564	1482	1542	1592	1577	1568	6%	37.9	5%	20.7
RICHFIELD	1390	1405	1386	1412	1407	1376	1450	1403	1420	1413	1%	4.7	3%	4.4
ROBBINSDALE	1419	1439	1461	1486	1487	1421	1446	1459	1506	1504	5%	22.3	6%	22.6
ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN	1467	1500	1534	1543	1540	1472	1514	1531	1528	1540	5%	26.2	4%	15.0
ST. LOUIS PARK	1446	1466	1506	1536	1513	1460	1496	1528	1535	1502	5%	31.0	3%	12.3
WAYZATA	1496	1554	1595	1601	1596	1537	1625	1660	1629	1617	7%	35.6	5%	16.4

											Improvement			
	Grade 5 Reading					Grade 5 Mathematics					Reading		Math	
District Name	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	1998	1999	2000	2002	2001	%	Average	%	Average
BLOOMINGTON	1457	1473	1527	1564	1594	1437	1446	1498	1503	1534	9%	37.5	7%	22.0
BRAINERD	1455	1504	1558	1610	1610	1458	1495	1558	1578	1600	10%	51.9	10%	34.5
Burroughs (MPLS)	1358	1457	1508	1573	1548	1293	1403	1459	1483	1514	12%	69.6	17%	49.1
EDEN PRAIRIE	1486	1503	1576	1612	1588	1456	1468	1514	1521	1518	6%	45.1	4%	18.0
EDINA	1552	1583	1632	1667	1651	1542	1540	1597	1621	1616	6%	39.4	5%	23.4
HOPKINS	1497	1530	1577	1633	1629	1470	1516	1570	1588	1584	8%	45.5	8%	30.4
MINNEAPOLIS	1294	1303	1342	1387	1399	1277	1289	1341	1364	1388	8%	31.8	9%	27.3
MINNETONKA	1517	1565	1594	1661	1687	1500	1516	1568	1598	1617	10%	46.1	8%	29.7
RICHFIELD	1410	1403	1428	1463	1441	1374	1364	1415	1440	1400	2%	18.4	2%	16.8
ROBBINSDALE	1426	1472	1503	1541	1560	1399	1429	1479	1505	1505	9%	37.6	8%	28.8
ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN	1497	1525	1557	1624	1630	1488	1492	1568	1567	1577	8%	41.3	6%	24.3
ST. LOUIS PARK	1456	1471	1523	1581	1573	1434	1439	1498	1521	1531	7%	42.7	7%	26.6
WAYZATA	1524	1561	1628	1665	1687	1518	1541	1617	1641	1659	10%	49.0	9%	36.4

Note:

1. Percentage of improvement is the difference of the scores between 2002 and 1998 divided by the score of 2002.
2. Average improvement is the slope of the linear regress through the given scores from 1998 to 2002 for each case.

Table 9. District Demographic Data, 2001-02

District	% IEP	% ESL	% Poverty	% Enrolled Before Oct.	% Male	% Female	% Indian	% Asian	% Hispanic	% Black	% White	% Minority	# Enrollment
BLOOMINGTON	8	7	26	97	51	50	1	8	6	11	73	27	10619
BRAINERD	9	0	34	97	53	47	0	0	0	1	97	3	7210
Burroughs, Minneapolis	4	23	32	98	53	47	0	4	7	23	65	35	490
EDEN PRAIRIE	11	4	7	99	52	48	1	7	1	3	88	12	10342
EDINA	8	2	5	99	51	49	0	3	1	2	93	7	6928
HOPKINS	9	6	15	96	49	51	1	3	5	8	83	17	8160
MINNETONKA	9	2	3	99	49	51	0	3	1	2	94	6	7603
RICHFIELD	7	17	35	97	53	47	3	9	13	19	57	43	4205
ROBBINSDALE	7	9	32	95	52	48	2	6	6	16	69	31	13654
ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN	11	3	11	97	53	47	0	5	2	6	86	14	28027
ST. LOUIS PARK	13	7	20	98	53	47	1	6	4	11	79	21	4212
WAYZATA	9	2	8	98	50	50	0	5	1	3	90	10	9362
State Overall	11	7	30	96	51	49	2	6	4	7	80	20	841697

Data Sources: CFL Website Historical Databases—cfl.state.mn.us

25

Table 10. Teacher Characteristics, 2001-02

District Name	# Full Time Teacher	Average Year Teaching	Average Teacher Salary	Teacher Work Days	Average Age	% BA	% MA	# First Year Teaching
BLOOMINGTON	629	11.4	$44,730	193	38	51	49	33
BRAINERD	447	15.9	$43,075	184	42	36	64	10
Burroughs (MPLS)	32	13.4	$51,519	194	43	43	57	2
EDEN PRAIRIE	593	12.7	$45,194	185	40	45	55	22
EDINA	412	9.6	$42,921	184	37	42	58	34
HOPKINS	543	11.6	$51,077	184	41	36	50	68
MINNETONKA	448	10.9	$46,943	184	39	46	54	41
RICHFIELD	254	11.3	$43,128	188	38	52	48	19
ROBBINSDALE	777	11.6	$44,849	189	40	55	45	48
ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN	1684	13.3	$42,751	185	40	44	56	59
ST. LOUIS PARK	272	10.5	$44,745	185	39	52	48	12
WAYZATA	486	13.3	$45,801	185	40	42	58	15
State Overall	52871	13.8	$42,770	187	41	57	43	2429

Data Source: State Historical Database Website—cfl.state.mn.us.

Table 11. Percentage of Teachers in First Year Teaching 1998-2002

	1998		1999		2000		2001		2002		
	# 1st Year	% 1st Year	# 1st Year	% 1st Year	# 1st Year	% 1st Year	# 1st Year	% 1st Year	# 1st Year	% 1st Year	
District Name	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Teach	Overall*
BLOOMINGTON	46	7%	53	8%	49	7%	33	5%	33	5%	34%
BRAINERD	6	1%	9	2%	14	3%	17	4%	10	2%	12%
Burroughs (MPLS)	0	0%	1	3%	2	6%	0	0%	2	6%	15%
EDEN PRAIRIE	57	9%	18	3%	35	5%	19	3%	22	4%	25%
EDINA	25	6%	35	8%	35	8%	30	6%	34	7%	34%
HOPKINS	44	7%	41	6%	63	9%	40	6%	68	10%	36%
MINNETONKA	59	13%	37	8%	36	7%	29	6%	41	9%	42%
RICHFIELD	20	7%	25	9%	29	10%	17	6%	19	7%	41%
ROBBINSDALE	80	9%	39	5%	73	8%	60	7%	48	6%	36%
ROSEMOUNT-APPLE VALLEY-EAGAN	121	7%	130	7%	110	6%	71	4%	59	3%	29%
ST. LOUIS PARK	44	15%	21	7%	15	5%	25	8%	12	4%	43%
WAYZATA	29	6%	21	4%	35	6%	28	5%	15	3%	26%

Note: 1. Overall is yielded by the total number of teachers within the five years divided by the sum of teachers as first year teaching within the five years. This percentage doesn't include the teachers as first-year-teaching who left the district during 1998 2002.

2. Data Source: State Historical Database Website—cfl.state.mn.us.

82

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